

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 HANOI 000714

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR CA/OCS/ACS/EAP (DGOODING, SLAWRENCE)
DEPT ALSO FOR EAP/BCLTV AND EAP/EX JJENKINS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [CASC](#) [VM](#)

SUBJECT: WARDEN MESSAGE - action request in paraS 1 and 5

1. Mission has received and transmitted the travel warning ref a. However, Mission wishes to point out that the comment in the third paragraph, ".the Department of State has suspended official travel to Vietnam until further notice" is not the Mission's understanding of the current situation. Mission has merely deferred non-essential TDY travel. Some essential TDY travel continues, and PCS and other official travel by officials assigned to Mission continues as planned.

Action requested: Mission requests that the Department issue a corrected travel warning immediately.

2. In addition, Mission sent the following update on the SARS situation via the warden system on Monday afternoon (March 24th). Mission would like to update and re-send the content of this message daily.

3. BEGIN TEXT OF WARDEN MESSAGE SENT.

Further to this morning's message, we will begin a daily update of the SARS situation. The picture is actually a bit improved today:

Authorized departure of Embassy family members:

Although WHO and CDC say the situation is confined and effective steps have been taken to isolate those suspected of being infected by SARS, in order to assure the peace of mind and safety of mission families, especially those with children, the Ambassador has requested, and the State Department has approved, voluntary departure for dependents of Embassy and Consulate staff. (We do not yet have an indication of how many family members, if any, intend to leave.)

The following statistics were taken from the World Health Organization's (WHO) website. This site is updated regularly and can be found at www.who.int/csr. Additional information can also be found on the US Centers for Disease Control website at www.cdc.gov.

SITUATION AS OF MARCH 22, 2003

Worldwide, all SARS cases are being classified based on whether that case meets certain criteria based on serious symptoms described on the WHO and CDC websites. Although these symptoms are strong criteria in an area with SARS, they may also pick up some cases that are caused by other diseases unrelated to SARS. While some laboratory data suggest possible viruses as being responsible, it will still take some time to develop a test that can positively detect SARS.

Worldwide:

Number of cases worldwide: 386

Number of deaths worldwide: 11

Suspected and/or probable cases are found in the following countries: Canada, China, Germany, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China, Italy, Ireland, Singapore, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, Taiwan, Thailand, United Kingdom, United States, and Vietnam.

The WHO's website indicates 22 suspected cases in the United States on March 22nd, CDC's website indicates 37.

Vietnam:

(These figures do not include the "index patient" who came in from Hong Kong, was later medically evacuated back to Hong Kong, and sadly, died in Hong Kong.)

Number of cases in Vietnam: 63

Number of deaths in Vietnam: 2

Unofficial Reports:

Unofficial reports indicate that there were two new "probable" cases admitted to Bach Mai hospital this weekend - both epidemiologically linked to health care workers at the Hanoi French Hospital.

Unofficial reports further indicate:

-One patient who was on a mechanical respirator was extubated, leaving 2 patients on ventilators and 4 patients in critical condition.

-Most other patients remain stable and many are improving.

-Worldwide the rate of fatality among SARS cases is 3%.

-Two patients have recovered and been determined to be no longer infectious to others and released to go home.

-The condition of the boy medically evacuated from Ho Chi Minh City to Taipei continues to improve.

-The incubation period for SARS has passed and the boy's 65 schoolmates who were on the same school trip have all been determined not to have contracted SARS.
-There were two other possible SARS cases in Ho Chi Minh City, but both have been ruled out.

We hope this information is helpful. Please look for further updates each morning.

14. End text of warden message sent.

15. Given the time difference and the necessity to awaken OCS duty officer to obtain clearance for warden messages, Mission requests blanket clearance to update the content of the above message and send the updated information each morning.

16. Mission also requests clearance to add the following correction to tomorrow morning's warden message:
"Further to our warden message issued on the morning of March 24th, the following correction is necessary. All official travel to Vietnam is not suspended. Some officials coming for non-essential purposes have been asked to defer their travel. Officials assigned to Vietnam and some official visitors continue to travel to and from Vietnam. The department of state remains concerned about the unavailability of adequate healthcare in Vietnam and continues to recommend that non-essential travel or stays in Vietnam be deferred.

17. WHO and CDC, as well as the GVN, indicate that the outbreak is confined in Vietnam and effective steps have been taken to isolate those suspected of being infected by SARS. Barring any new introduction of SARS to Vietnam, it does seem that the situation is contained.

BURGHARDT